

289 EAST MAIN STREET, WESTMINSTER

WAGNER HOUSE

A typical late Victorian L-shaped house, the "Reese-Wagner House" was built by Orlando Reese c. 1880, on lots 2 and 3 of the original town, an area once part of a large tanyard. The house still has its splendid arched marble mantles, enabled with fanciful coats of arms. Many other once-august houses in the City are near-copies of this building (e.g. 202 East Main Street) but no other place can claim, as this place can, to be the site of the first ice cream store in town.



## MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

## INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

East  
289 ~~South~~ Main Street

AND/OR COMMON

"Wagner Home"

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

289 East Main Street (MD 32)

6

CITY, TOWN

Westminster

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Carroll

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

## ACCESSIBLE

☐ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☒ NO

## PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☐ PARK☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

John Wagner

Telephone #: 848-4582

STREET &amp; NUMBER

289 East Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Westminster

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21157

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Carroll County Office Building

Liber #:

Folio #:

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Center Street

CITY, TOWN

Westminster

STATE

Maryland

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

None

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE



**7 DESCRIPTION****CONDITION**☒ EXCELLENT☐ GOOD☐ FAIR☐ DETERIORATED☐ RUINS☐ UNEXPOSED**CHECK ONE**☐ UNALTERED☒ ALTERED**CHECK ONE**☒ ORIGINAL SITE☐ MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_**DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

"The Wagner House", number 289 East Main Street, Westminster, is located about 60 yards west of the intersection of Main Street, (Md. Route 32) and Manchester Avenue. The house faces south, towards Main Street. Gardens border the house to the east and north; a small alley runs along the west side, between the Wagner Home and 287 East Main Street.

Although there is no substantiated evidence to indicate that the bulk of the house was not conceived as a whole, two rather distinct sections meet the eye: a 3 bay - 2½ story section parallel with Main Street, and a 2½ story bay windowed perpendicular section to the west, creating a modified L-shape thus. (For ease in description, these will be called sections 1 and 2 respectively.) There is a 2 story shed roofed addition running with the entire length of Section 2's east front until it intersects Section 1.

Built of a deep rose brick, the house is accented by the white of the wood trim including the half-a-hexagon bay window, the 2 one story porches - one which runs along the entire southern (entrance) facade of Section 1 and one recessed at the northeast intersection of Sections 1 and 2. The second story of the eastern addition to Sections 2 is covered with white weatherboard. Functioning black louvered shutters add further accents.

All brick is laid in 6 course common bond above a low, roughly coursed fieldstone foundation. (The lot slightly dips to the north, thereby exposing more of the northern foundation.) The gabled roofs of both main sections, and the shed roof of the addition, are all covered corrugated sheet metal, as they probably were originally. The roofs extend about one foot from the house and are all finished with simple mouldings at the eaves. There are two low flat-capped chimneys; one flush with the center of the lower-pitched east gable, the other about 6 feet north of the junction of the bay window and the west wall of Section 2.

The walls are pierced in a somewhat confusing manner, except for the street (south) facade which has the 2 story bay window and small round arched gable window of Section 2, and the 2 story regularly spaced 3 bay facade of Section 1. The western most bay of Section 1 is the main door to the house. The eastern facade of Section 1 is 2 bays wide on each floor (regularly spaced) with 2 small horizontally aligned

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY



# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES	c. 1879	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Orlando Reese
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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

If the buildings of Westminster, and of small town America in general, are to be valued today, it must finally be because they display what V. Sackville-West called the "centuries" long progressions of living-patterns". If the Wagner House is to be considered important for reasons other than its age, it must be because we think it significant that the Stansbury's as owners, if not as builders, felt it desirable of copying a Doge's coat of arms in marble (and of varnishing it), of creating a one column in-antis temple front, and of playing with different roof pitches. The house is a fine late Victoria example of Henry Glassie's Mid-Atlantic two-thirds Georgian House plan, with one room extensions to the north and east.

In the social history of the town, the Wagner House has a similar low-key vernacular appeal. It was not the home of great politicians or pioneers, but it is the site of the first ice cream made in Westminster, and of the town's first ice-cream parlor (c. 1910), which, the present owner remembers, was located in the northern ground floor section of Section 2, and in warm weather on the rear loggia.

As this lot was the site of the old tanyard, the early history of the Wagner house and lot is inextricably bound with the Yingling-Blizzard lot to the east. After Jacob and Mary Yingling died, all the heirs (see Blizzard title data), on September 10, 1868, joined to sell a 60' by 198' lot "with the tanyard and mill buildings" to their brother, William Yingling (Deed 38/522). William died on November 29, 1875, and his brother, Elias, as trustee, sold the lot to his nephew, Orlando Reese on September 30, 1878, for \$500 (50/505). Orlando Reese was the son of William D. Reese and Sarah Jane Yingling (daughter of Jacob). William D. had moved to Westminster from Baltimore and established a flourishing grocery store across the street from the tanyard, at 292 East Main Street. Orlando presumably then built the brick house that stands today, or on October 14, 1912, he sold the lot for \$3,300 to his brother William D. Reese (120/421). The ice-cream

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY



**MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Beginning at Main Street, 80 feet from its intersection with Manchester Road, running thence southerly 60 feet, thence at right angles, 198 feet to an alley, thence with the alley 60 feet thence 198 feet to the beginning. Containing 11,880 square feet. (n.b. This is the legal description.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Christopher Weeks, ConsultantSeptember, 1976

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Westminster Historical Sites Survey

STREET &amp; NUMBER

TELEPHONE

c/o City Hall - Public Works Department

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

WestminsterMaryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438



windows in the gable. The 2 story eastern facade of Section 2 is 3 bays long (regularly spaced), with the first 2 bays moving northward from Section 1 being doors (again, "in-antis"). There are no openings at all on the north facade of Section 1; Section 2 is 3 bays wide and is pierced: ground floor - space, window, door; second floor - window, window, space; under the steep gable, which rises only over the western 2 bays, is a small window. The door on this facade is approached by a vertical set of gray painted wooden steps rising from the east; the door is encircled on three sides by whitewashed plywood topped with a green and white metal awning. The western facade (made up entirely of the west wall of Section 2) has 6 windows on 2 stories, vertically aligned, but all in the northern half of the wall. This arrangement is explained by noting that 287 East Main Street, probably existing when 289 was built, extended back exactly as far as the blind wall now does. The windows of all facades have simple enframements and are topped (for the ground and second stories only) by 3 course gauged flat arches. The gable windows of Section 2 have either a round header arch (south facade) or no decoration at all (north facade); the gable windows of Section 1 also are plain, all windows are two over two double-hung sash. The doors on the south and east facades are aluminum and glass storm doors.

The transition from interior to exterior is eased and made less abrupt as all doors lead onto porches. The flat roof of the street (south) porch is, as are the rest of the roofs, covered with corrugated metal. Widely spaced simple brackets support this roof, as do square posts; the posts are in turn supported by 3 foot tall square bases. Urn-drop pendants are located between each post at the tops of the segmented arches which, along with the single railing, tie the whole effect together. The loggia of the east facade is behind a single square post and evenly spaced 2 x 4's which run between the post and the south wall as a railing.

The front (south) entrance door, the bottom half of which is composed of 2 vertical recessed panels, the top half of which is a single pane of glass, leads to a large through hall. The right side of the hall contains a broad staircase that originally led up all the way to the attic; the present owners have put plywood boards at the second story ceiling to conserve heat. Each floor was identical in plan; a large room to the east (which with the entrance hall, filled Section 1) and 3 rooms in a line to the west of the hall. The present owners have installed baths in the two rear west rooms.

An arched grey-marble chimney piece is to be found in the east room and front west rooms of each floor. The arches have, in place of keystones, escutcheons with more or less fancifully designed arms. The keystone in the front west room has the arms of the Grimani family. The 2 east fireplaces have been sealed off and gas spaceheaters have been installed.



legend now becomes very plausible, given that the Reese's were prominent grocers and merchants. (An article appeared in the "American Sentinel" in 1913 (month unknown) commenting on the longevity of the Reese store.)

On March 3, 1936, William D. Reese II, and his wife Ada B., sold the house and lot to John W. Stonesifer and Jennie A. Stonesifer, his wife (Deed 163/496, no consideration, but \$4 of I.R.S. stamps). Mrs. Stonesifer died and on October 1, 1958, John W. sold the place to E. Rogers Lee and Margaret M., his wife. This was deed 295/217. The I.R.S. stamps increased to \$10.45 and the lot's first metes and bounds, courses and distances description is given; we are also told that this is lots 2 and 3 on the old plat of Westminster (it is actually lot 2 and the eastern half of lot 3). On April 29, 1960, the Lees sold, with the same metes and bounds description, the house and lot to the present owners, John Wagner and Julia Bair Wagner, his wife, for \$13,5000 (Deed 319/382).







ARR 339

89 E. Main Street, Westminster

V. Jacade

1/76

Weeks







202 339

209 E. Main St. Westminster

v. jacobs

176 C. Wachs